5: Rouse E-4 (no date) 1948 ST13 Callinago ST13 (1650-1700)

THE CARIB

By Irving Rouse

INTRODUCTION

174 The *Carib*, like the *Arawak*, were South American in origin. According to their traditions, they came into the West Indies no more than a century before the arrival of Columbus; by his time they had succeeded in conquering all the Lesser Antilles and probably also the northeastern part of Trinidad, exterminating the *Arawak* men who formerly lived there and taking their wives as slaves. They were conducting raids upon the *Arawak* of the Greater Antilles, but there is no confirmation of reports that they had settled anywhere in that territory, except possibly in spots on the eastern end of Puerto Rico.

ARCHEOLOGY

172 Very little work has been done on *Carib* archeology. Some writers, however, have assigned to the *Carib* all the archeological remains in the Lesser Antilles described above as *Arawak*. In view of the shortness of the time during which the *Carib* inhabited the Lesser Antilles, this is not likely. The only possibly authentic *Carib* site known to the writer is the place at Banana Bay on the small island of Balliceaux to which the English moved the *Black Carib* in 1797. Fewkes (1922, p. 89), who made a study of this site, has not described the material found.[1]

[583] Additional *Carib* sites will undoubtedly be found in the future, but it should be difficult to identify them because of the fact that the *Carib* wives were often captive *Arawak* women, who probably made the pottery and other objects which survive in the sites according to their own customs. A study of the location of the historic *Carib* sites may perhaps help to overcome this difficulty.

HISTORY

175 Columbus first made contact with the *Carib* during his second voyage, in 1493, when he purposely sailed farther south in order to investigate these fierce savages of whom he had heard in Hispaniola. His first landing place was a small uninhabited island near Dominica; from there he went to Guadeloupe and discovered a *Carib* village. The men being absent on a raid, he was able to receive on board six captive *Arawak* women from

[1] Lovén (1935, p. 545) believes that even this site is *Arawak*.

6: Taylor E-5 (1930-1937) 1938
ST13 Callinago ST13

532
• 172

[E-5 p. 157]

Dominica Carib man and petroglyphs—Guadeloupe.

9: Ober N-5 (1876-1878) 1895
ST13 Callinago ST13

In the Island of St. John are some rocks covered with incised figures, which are called the "Carib rocks,"—rude petroglyphs without meaning; but undoubtedly of aboriginal origin. Throughout the Greater Antilles, I cannot recall any of these petroglyphs, and they seem to be peculiar to the Carib area, other and finer ones being found in the island of St. Vincent. The descendants of the Caribs to-day are confined to two islands only, Dominica (which was the first land sighted by Columbus on his second voyage) and St. Vincent, the former between latitude fifteen and sixteen north, and the latter in latitude thirteen. They are described in my book on these islands,[1] published fifteen years ago, and I will not repeat my descriptions, except to state that there are some twenty families of pure blood remaining in Dominica, and perhaps half a dozen in St. Vincent. There may be three hundred in each island, but so intimately mixed with the negroes that their distinguishing features are nearly obliterated. They dwell on the windward or eastern coast of either island, in each having a portion of land assigned them, which they cultivate in common, or which, at least, is not owned in severalty. They subsist upon the fruits of their agricultural labors and the sea, eked out with the scant products of the chase, consisting mainly of small birds, agoutis, and iguanas. Their huts are almost as primitive as at the time of discovery, being constructed of palm logs and thatched with palm leaves. In Dominica most of them speak the French patois (a legacy from the former owners of the island), and in St. Vincent, English; being Catholics in the former and Church of England in the latter, as to their religious faith. All vestiges of their native religion have apparently disappeared, although they still have a belief in the jumbies and wood-spirits of the negroes. They are to-day gentle and easily managed, showing no trace of the warlike spirit of their ancestors; in shape they are robust, well-formed, with

[1] See "Camps in the Caribbees," by F. A. Ober. Boston, 1879.

9: Ober N-5 (1876-1878) 1895
ST13 Callinago ST13

garments, occasionally, and beads. . . . The Guiana Indians still make fire by rubbing two sticks together; they make baskets similar to those now made by the West-Indian Caribs, as well as cassava sieves, *matapies*, or cassava strainers, and other articles of the Indian economy. . . . Cotton is preferred by the Caribs to all other fibers. They still use the *tiki*, or wooden war-club, the only aboriginal weapon now in use. . . . The celebrated ourali poison is made chiefly by a single tribe, the Macusis, and particular Indians. . . . In the shell mounds, the objects found resemble those from the West Indies; and human bones have been found split open, as if for their marrow. Of aboriginal art, as shown in paintings or carvings, there are few traces, the petroglyphs being few and very rude in design and execution. . . . One practice still prevails among the Caribs of which we find no trace in the island: that is *couvade*, or male child-bed, when the man, at parturition, takes to his hammock, where he stays for days, and even weeks (if he be delicate), and is fed on gruel, abstains from smoking, and is comfortably coddled, while the poor woman attends to her hardly-interrupted domestic duties. In conclusion, as to the religion of the Guiana Caribs, it is a pure animism; every Indian believes that he himself, and every human being, consists of two parts, a body and a soul, or spirit; and moreover, that all other objects have the same qualities; the whole Indian world swarms with spirits, good and evil. They do not believe in a spiritual hierarchy, — only in spirits that are, or once were, situated in material bodies of some kind, — and no apotheosis has of these made gods, or a God. . . . The Carib name for God, *Tamosi*, means the Ancient One. . . . As to scientific acquirements, the Indian, now, as in ancient times, is without even the rudiments of scientific thought . . . "

CARIB PETROGLYPHS, IMPLEMENTS, AND POTTERY. Were it not even that we still have evidence of the existence in the Carib area of Indians who dwell here, in the con-

9: Ober N-5 (1876-1878) 1895
ST13 Callinago ST13

tinued presence of their descendants, we should still be enabled to judge somewhat of the state of their civilization by their remains. I have mentioned the existence, in the island of St. John, one of the Virgin group, of rock-carvings; near the other extreme of the Caribbean Chain, in the island of St. Vincent, in latitude 13 north, 5 degrees farther south, are several of these strange rocks. I have seen some half-dozen of these petroglyphs, in that island, which I visited three, and fifteen, years ago. Also, in the island of Guadaloupe, in latitude 16, are several others of similar character. Those that I photographed were all near the very spot where Columbus discovered the first Caribs, at Capes Terre, and near Three Rivers, island of Guadaloupe. The incised figures represent, rudely, heads adorned with plumes; and other characters are found which cannot be adequately described. These petroglyphs are indubitably of Carib origin, being found only within the Carib area; and so far as I am aware, few, if any similar, have been seen in the larger islands. The characters which do not rise to the dignity of hieroglyphics or ideographs, have no coherent sequence or continuity, only a general resemblance. It would be interesting to gather all these and submit them for study to a competent body of ethnologists but I doubt if great results would be obtained.

More abundant and conclusive in their testimony, are the numerous minor objects of Carib art and workmanship, which have been, from time to time, gathered in the various islands. In that same island of Guadaloupe exists to-day, what is, perhaps, the largest and most nearly complete collection of Carib implements in the world, gathered together and owned by a learned collector, M. Louis Guesde. It is described, with numerous types delineated, in the *Smithsonian Report* for 1884, by Prof. Mason, to whom the world is so deeply indebted for valuable monographs on kindred subjects.[1] I myself saw the collection,

[1] "*Smithsonian Report*," Washington, D. C., 1884, pp. 731-837.

9: Ober N-5 (1876-1878) 1895
ST13 Callinago ST13

172 two years ago, and can testify to its value and completeness. It is for sale, and, although M. Guesde asks what seems a very large price for it, still, I think it should be secured for some American museum, and so trust. Referring those who may desire further particulars of the Carib relics especially to that paper, I will merely add, that these remains are in the shape of celts, of jade or jadeite, and serpentine, beautifully polished, discoidal and spheroidal stones, battle-axes (these of volcanic stone), semi-lunar and crescentic stones, and many odd shapes as yet unclassified, as axes with notched heads, horn-shaped and symmetrical, etc., etc. It has been said that no flaked or chipped specimen has been found within the Carib area, but in this collection are at least two, though M. Guesde thinks they came from the South American continent. A few idols, or figures in clay, are shown, as well as beads, amulets, perforated stones, mortars, dishes of stone, awls, hooks and perhaps harpoons; two vases, also, one of guiacum wood, which is hard and durable, disks or quoits, mealing-stones, pestles and chisels.

In this connection, I may be pardoned for alluding to my own "finds" in these islands, some one hundred specimens having been sent by me to the Government Museum, at different times. One of the most unique was a figure of a tortoise, carved from hard wood, which was found by me in a cave near St. Vincent, in 1878. From this latter island have been sent to the various museums of Europe and the United States, many specimens of stone implements. The most remarkable "find" was made a few years ago, of a cache or deposit of stone celts and axes, nearly two hundred in number, which were exhibited at the Jamaica Exposition, in 1891. St. Vincent seems to have been the ancient headquarters of the Caribs, if we may judge from the relics they have left behind, for this island is, or was, strewn with them. Some of those I secured and sent to the Smithsonian were veritable battle-axes,

9: Ober N-5 (1876-1878) 1895
ST13 Callinago ST13

which must have taken the strength of a giant to wield and carry continuously in battle, one of them weighing over six pounds and measuring ten inches in breadth. This name is applied, however, for lack of a better, at present, as they may have served other uses than those of war. Chisels of shell, such as are common in Barbadoes, and the low-lying islands, are infrequently found in those that are volcanic, which mainly constitute the Caribbees.

The few in the Guesde collection are from the shell of the fossil *strombus gigas*, as being harder than the living *strombus*. "It is certain that the Caribs did not take the living *strombi*, but were careful to use the fossil, which had in time acquired the hardness of ivory."

Several minor collections exist in the West Indies, and these, if possible, should be gathered together in some American museum, where they can be studied by those to whom the scientific aspects of the problem are familiar and whose opinion would be competent.

THE ORIGIN OF THE ANTILLEANS.—In a general way, as shown in the preceding pages, I have gathered such information and herewith present it, as has been available to one engaged in other pursuits than ethnology. It would certainly be germane to inquire into, and even to speculate upon, the origin of the peoples whose works we have been examining. Without any pretence to authoritative premises, yet I would venture to offer some facts bearing upon the question, with the humble hope that they may aid in the elucidation of the problem of the origin of the West-Indian Aborigines.

Says the great Humboldt: "When a continent and its adjacent islands are peopled by one and the same race, we may choose between two hypotheses: an emigration from one, or from the other. . . . The archipelago of the W. I. islands forms a narrow and broken neck of land parallel with the isthmus of Panama, and supposed by some geographers to have anciently joined the peninsula of